

AND THEN IT'S SPRING

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Ages: 4 - 8; Grades: PreK - 3

Themes: Seasons and Nature, Science, Growth and Change

Running Time: TBD

SUMMARY

Winter is over, and everything is brown. *All around you have brown.* A boy and his dog decide to plant a garden, in hopes that spring will come. They wait and worry on their seeds, anxiously watching for glimpses of green. As time drags on, and the brown remains, small signs of spring begin to appear. And then there is a sunny day, after a rainy day.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will make and verify predictions based on background knowledge.
- Students will identify the four seasons and their characteristics.
- Students will observe and record information about the changes in nature in spring.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Review the four seasons with students. Use a 4-column chart to record the students' ideas. Draw pictures to express students' ideas when possible. Guiding questions:

- What are the names of the four seasons?
- What is the weather like in fall(autumn)/winter/spring/summer?
- What happens to plants in fall(autumn)/winter/spring/summer?
- What do animals do in fall(autumn)/winter/spring/summer?

Tell students that they are going to watch a movie about a young boy and his dog who are tired of the winter and excited to greet the spring. Using the seasons chart completed in the previous activity, ask:

- What do you think the land looks like at the end of winter?
- What will happen when the boy plants some seeds? What will they need to grow?

Then, review making predictions with the students. Remind students that they can use picture clues and the text to make predictions. Read aloud the first few pages of the book, or show the beginning of the movie. Stop at the part that says, "And then you worry about those

little seeds." Ask:

- Do you think the seeds are going to grow? Why or why not?
- What in the text or pictures helped you with your prediction?
- What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that?

Encourage students to watch and listen to see if their predictions are correct.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Remind students of the predictions that they made before viewing the movie. Ask:

- Were we correct about what we thought would happen to the seeds?
- What caused them to finally grow?
- What pictures or words helped us with our predictions?
- What do you think will happen when the spring turns into summer?

What activities will the boy do? What do you do in the summertime? Using children's ideas, extend the story into the summer. Encourage students to use their own experiences to imagine things that the boy might like to do. Have students contribute ideas that you add to the story. Scribe the story on a large chart paper. When you are finished, read the whole story aloud to the students. Then, copy it onto blank paper, photocopy, and give to students to illustrate. Read the big story aloud daily as students follow in their individual books to encourage whole language development and fluency.

Teach the life cycle of a plant. Begin with guiding questions:

- Where do seeds come from?
- What do seeds make?
- What happens to seeds when they are given the things that plants need to live?
- How do seeds grow?

Next, make a poster with the students that shows the life cycle of a plant. Beans are a good example because most students have seen green beans and the seeds inside of the pods. The poster should list the steps of the life cycle and have an illustration accompanying each step. The steps for a bean plant are:

1. A plant begins as a seed.
2. The seed sprouts.
3. The seed grows roots.

4. The sprout grows into a plant.
5. The plant grows a fruit.
6. The fruit holds the new seeds inside.
7. The seeds are dropped and the cycle starts over.

This poster can be reproduced into cards that the students can color, cut out, and glue onto their own poster.

Plant vegetable seeds in cups in the classroom, or in an outdoor garden. Review with students what plants need to grow: sunlight/warmth, water, soil, and air. Give students time each day to tend to their garden. As an extension, they can keep a picture journal of the growth of their plants.

Create a monthly "Season Watch" observation chart. Choose a day each week that the class will go out and observe and record information about the weather, temperature, and changes in plants and animals. Provide students with crayons and a sketch of the playground, including any trees in the area. Give them time to look around and observe their surroundings. Then, have them color what the trees look like, the sky, the grass, and any other observable changes in nature, such as flowers, clouds, bright sun, precipitation, etc. Once inside, discuss their observations and complete the class chart. Continue this through autumn so that students can experience and record the change of the season. If you live in an area where the season doesn't change drastically, use pictures from magazines and newspapers to show students how the seasons change in more northern areas.

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